

WHAT HERBERT DIDN'T SAY.

Bruce Grit's Snappy Report of a Speech, Which, if Uttered by the Great Southerner, Would Have Awakened the Dormant Conscience of the Nation.

Albany, N. Y., Special.—The Alabama conference "have some and went" and I reckon the earth will continue to revolve on its own axis as usual. There was only one speech made before that body of the assembled wisdom of the South that deserves to be noticed or characterized as statesmanlike and able—that speech was made by Gov. MacCorkle of West Virginia. Ex Secretary of the Navy, Hilary A. Herbert's speech on the opening of the conference, as a literary effort, makes mighty fine reading, but it is woefully lacking in logic and sound reasoning. Bourke Cockran's promised deliverance in opposition to the XVth Amendment won't stand fire. The New York Sun has already knocked it all to pieces editorially, and in the language of diplomacy has characterized this brilliant, but misguided Irishman as an ass. "If you see it in the Sun its so."

There's a humorous side to this conference and the more I study it, the more I smile as I think of the mental gymnastics of the staid and solemn white men there assembled, to "do," the Negro, whom their fathers made all that he is not, in their virtuous and holy eyes, I smile at the inconsistency and the jackassical persistency of these conscience stricken white men of the South in measuring the Negro by the same standards they would measure men who have always been free and always had opportunities for mental and moral growth and development. I smile when I remember what Tacitus wrote about the ignorance, stupidity and barbarous manners of the ancestors of these white men of the South and North, whom it took centuries to civilize and refine and make respectable, and who now hold up their hands in holy horror because the Negro with only 35 years of opportunity isn't a paragon of wisdom, virtue or knowledge. This Negro, the product of their civilization and christianity after 250 years tutelage in their school of ethics and morals is now being judged by the sons of the men who ate sour grapes, and put their children's teeth on edge. These orators of the South in discussing the problem, haven't touched the problem once. They haven't dared to touch it. They have been talking at it, over it, around it and under it, but none of them have hit the bull's eye, (and there are some pretty good marks men down South, too.) Why didn't Herbert say in so many words: "We of the South are the residuary legatees of a century of dishonor, the work of our fathers in depriving the Negro race of an equal chance in life. Our fathers spoiled their women, and broke the spirit of their men, and our blood is mingled with theirs. They are flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone. We have wronged them and we are still wronging them, in refusing to treat them fairly, to give them equal chance in life and to help them rise and to live down the infamy bequeathed to them by our forbears. We are all aware that some of the best blood of the South courses in the veins of this race and that even Thomas Jefferson himself had a Negro grand daughter. How many of us gentlemen here present who have not only Negro grand daughters, but illegitimate sons and daughters, whom we dare not recognize or own. Gentlemen, the 'damned spot' will not out." We have inherited from

our fathers, and we are bequeathing to our children the same social corruption and impurity which wrought destruction to the social fabric in the old days and polluted the stream and tainted the blood of the aristocracy of the South. Let us now be honest to ourselves, honest with the Negro who is closer to us by ties of blood and consanguinity than any alien race. We have been the aggressors, we are the real criminals, we were the original rapists and upon our head be all the blood that has been spilled during a century of shame and dishonor and in which we have sought to make this race responsible for the crimes we taught it to commit. The Negro has been unjustly accused at the bar of public opinion we have taken a mean and cowardly advantage of him. We have held, and are still holding him up to scorn and ridicule and contempt for crimes which we have been teaching him for 250 years. We are the only original libertines and polygamists on the Western Hemisphere. Our fathers sowed the seed when slavery became a fixture on this continent. They had white wives and Negro concubines and mistresses and through the latter gave our blood to these whose future we are met to discuss. Indignation over the condition which confronts us, ill becomes us. Penitence, remorse, shame, humiliation and disgrace should be the feelings which we ought to experience during the sessions of this conference. Let no man here present take to his soul the notion that he is better than other men—better than the Negro. For to this patient, plodding, toiling, uncomplaining Negro the white men of the South owe more for their advantages in material and moral progress than to any other race on earth. The bulk of our wealth has its foundation in the unrequited toil of the black man for we have robbed him. Systematically, and by law, both before and since his emancipation from bondage. Our boasted morality, intelligence, virtues and civilization represent two hundred and fifty years of opportunity of which we have denied this people. We have wasted them and built upon the ruins of their misfortunes and disadvantages. Every southern white boy and girl whom we have educated owe their education to a black boy and girl whom we have deprived of equal chances and opportunities for acquiring knowledge and of an equal chance when acquired in spite of us of developing the highest and best in them. This gentlemen is the kernel in the problem we are met to discuss and to solve with our multiplied wisdom and intelligence." This kind of a speech would have better become Secretary Herbert than the platitudinous and sophistical jumble which he emitted on the opening of the conference, because it contains more real facts, more truth, more reason, more consistency. But he didn't make this kind of a speech and more's the pity. Before the problem is solved some great white man at the South will make just such a speech and awake the sleeping conscience of the people of that section to its gravity and importance. The Alabama Conference will do neither good, nor harm. It was a gathering of Pharisees who continually thanked God that they were not as other men. We all know in what esteem the Almighty held the Pharisees of old and with what consideration he treated the Publican who confessed his faults. The South must confess its faults and begin to make restitution to the Negro for its hell black crimes, covering a period of two and a half centuries. Every one of the men who spoke

against us at Mobile should put his red hand over his mouth and hang his head in shame. The Almighty will settle this problem, and the southern white man, try he never so hard, can not escape his just share of punishment for his failure to settle it as God would have him settle it, because he has the intelligence, the means and the ability to settle it right. When human justice fails, God's justice is all sufficient and God's justice never fails. Don't forget Mr. Southern white man "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and set the children's teeth on edge." Let the white children of the South in the future beware of sour grapes.

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